

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

This position is located in the Meat Grading and Certification Branch, Livestock and Seed Division, Agricultural Marketing Service. This Branch's operations are conducted on a permissive, financially self-supporting basis which fulfills an important economic need of the livestock and meat industry by providing voluntary grading and certification services to facilitate the orderly marketing of red meats and meat products.

The incumbent receives on-the-job training in the technical aspects of grading and certification work in preparation for an Agricultural Commodity Grader (Meat) position. The Student Trainee performs meat grading and quality assurance monitoring duties of limited scope and responsibility. The position is located at either a regional office, area office, or other office location and may involve details to different geographical areas.

## **II. DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

Under the direct supervision of experienced meat graders and supervisors, the Student Trainee:

- > receives formal and on-the-job training in applying basic meat grading and certification theories and techniques.
- > studies, maintains, and applies rules, regulations, instructions, policies and procedures governing the grading and certification of meats, prepared meats, and meat products.
- > applies preliminary quality and/or yield grade designations to beef, veal, calf, and lamb carcasses offered for grading.
- > applies, or oversees the application of roller brands to carcasses previously identified for quality and/or yield grade.
- > explains and defends grades assigned to carcasses in terms of official standards.
- > corrects self-made errors.
- > examines meat and/or meat products before, during, and after processing, handling and transportation for conformance with some, but not all, contractual requirements and specifications.

- > reviews contractor's product to determine quality, processing, handling, packaging, refrigeration, transportation and storage compliance with purchase orders, contracts, and technical specifications.
- > performs these assessments by employing sensory evaluation and instruments designed for field examination of products.
- > maintains adequate control and proper storage of assigned equipment at all times to assure only authorized use, and correct application of grade and other official marks.
- > prepares agricultural grading and acceptance certificates at the discretion of the supervisor.
- > participates in public demonstrations and various other meat grader activities.

### **III. EVALUATION FACTORS**

#### **A. Knowledge Required by the Position**

The Student Trainee must possess the knowledge of the basic principles, concepts, and methodologies of grading and certification work, as would typically be acquired during one work period as a Student Trainee (Meat Grading) GS-099-4 and 3 years of a pertinent baccalaureate and/or cooperative education program.

The incumbent must display the ability to utilize previously acquired skills and master the official regulations, procedures, techniques, grading standards, and quality assurance specifications.

#### **B. Supervisory Controls**

The supervisor or senior grader provides the assignment giving necessary detailed instructions on the methods essential in performing each phase of the work.

The Student Trainee works in strict adherence to the rules, regulations, instructions, etc. Supervisors or senior graders are readily available to clarify instructions, product characteristics, or circumstances which are new or unusual.

The work is closely reviewed, and it may be checked while in progress and upon completion for compliance with instructions, adherence to prescribed methods and procedures, technical proficiency, and accuracy.

#### **C. Guidelines**

Written guidelines include official grade standards, regulations, specifications, visual aids, instructional training material, technical manuals, and other documents. The student adheres closely to the guidelines and instructions.

Prior to performing work the student receives other task related guidance. Borderline cases and/or situations not directly covered are referred to a supervisor or senior grader for classification or determination.

#### **D. Complexity**

Most of the incumbent's duties involve following several closely related procedures. The technical factors are relatively apparent and readily verifiable. Task variation stems primarily from the particular type of grading or certification work performed.

#### **E. Scope and Effect**

The work involves following specific rules, standards, procedures, etc., for each type of meat or meat product being graded or certified. Although the incumbent may make some carcass grade or product compliance decisions, such determinations are under the close supervision of an experienced grader or supervisor. Determinations of grade and/or product compliance affect the product's market value and consequently, the economic interests of producers, processors, wholesalers, and in some cases, governmental agencies or institutions.

#### **F. Personal Contacts**

Contacts include Agricultural Commodity Graders, meat grading supervisors, meat inspectors, other Federal and State Governmental employees, consumers, and industry personnel.

#### **G. Purpose of Contacts**

Contacts with industry employees are primarily for the purpose of coordinating the students duties with plant activities. Minor difficulties may be resolved by the student, but most questions and problems are referred to a senior grader for resolution.

#### **H. Physical Demands**

The work involves turning suspended carcass sides (approximately 200-400 pounds); lifting heavy cartons; prolonged periods of standing, walking, stooping, bending, and climbing; physical coordination and finger dexterity to perform digital examinations of commodities; ability to detect abnormalities in commodities through normal or corrected vision in at least one eye for distance, depth perception and color; the ability to assure safety in a highly mechanized and/or noisy environment through adequate or correctable hearing; and the ability to determine product quality through sensory perception (taste, smell, etc.).

#### **I. Work Environment**

The work environment temperatures may vary including exposure to temperatures in coolers (25-40 degrees Fahrenheit), and occasional exposure for short periods to sub-zero temperatures; the high noise levels of industrial processing equipment; the risks of fork-lifts, meat hooks and/or

meat products and other items moving or falling; slippery floors and stairs; and the risks of cutting and sawing equipment.